

All the World Guilty Before God

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[0 : 00] At our normal rate of verse-by-verse exposition, we usually average about one to two verses per Sunday, unless the verse is really loaded, and then sometimes half a verse.

And then I do not mean to say that we have exhausted the verse at all, because these verses, as is true of every verse in the Word of God, has no bottom in it. You do not plumb the depths of something which is inexhaustible.

And that is certainly what God's Word is. But I guess I mean to say that we exhausted to the extent of our abilities at that particular point in our Christian life when we are dealing with the verse.

For the past 49 verses of Romans, beginning with verse 1 of chapter 2 through chapter 3 in verse 20, we would ordinarily take between 30 and 40 studies to cover that amount of material.

But we have taken them all, that is all 49 verses, in just 10 studies, or approximately 10 hours. And the question might very legitimately be asked, well, why is this the case?

[1 : 09] Why have you so much more rapidly gone over this material than you would have other portions? Well, a couple of reasons. First of all, the content is very similar from chapter 1 and verses 21 through 32.

And not only that, but I think we have spent all the time that we need to, to develop the theme from God's perspective.

I am quite confident that we have spent about all of the time that we dare to from our perspective. Someone was saying to me the other day, I didn't know why it was, but lately it seems as though when I have left church on Sunday morning, I feel so depressed, so down.

And I thought, well, I'm sure this has something to do with it, and can you imagine how I feel? Doubly so. Not only from getting two shots here, but from getting one in my study.

This is not edifying material. I do not profess that it is such at all. In fact, it is very depressing. You just get down here in the muck and mire of human depravity and wallow around a while, and if that doesn't depress you, nothing will.

[2 : 21] And that's what we've been doing for several weeks now. The picture is as morbid and as gross and as unappetizing and as uncomplimentary as anything could possibly be, because it is a very apt description of what man is.

And I know, I am confident I'm reading the minds of some people when they say, Well, Marv, I realize that, you know, man is certainly not as good as he could be, but you don't need to make it any worse than it is.

And my only response is, and I say this with all my heart, I cannot make it worse than it is. I don't like it. But my human vocabulary and my limitations will not allow me to really explain to you how terrible sin is in the eyes of God.

I don't have the ability to do that. Neither do I have the ability to really relate to you the infinite holiness of our God. I cannot do that either.

So all I can say is, this becomes a problem with where do you draw the line. We can do a couple of things. First of all, we can dwell on this.

[3 : 37] We can take every one of these verses, mean and nasty as they are about our old human nature, and we can just so absorb ourselves in them and treat them in such a thorough manner and in such detail and dwell on it and go over it and over it and over it.

I don't know if there would be anybody left here after six months of that. Or we could do the opposite. Just take all 49 verses in one session and be done with it.

You see, at the one extreme, you have too much detail and too much exhaustive study of a very, very negative theme. And on the other hand, if you take the other extreme, you end up with a superficial treatment that is just once over that really doesn't begin to do justice to the text either.

So what it boils down to is, I guess, when a preacher goes through Romans, each man has to decide for himself where he is going to draw the line. So all I can say is, I trust that we have spent all of the time on it that we need to from God's perspective.

I think we have spent all the time that we dare to from our perspective. And frankly, it is a little bit depressing to me too. Actually, it doesn't begin with chapter 2 and verse 1.

[4 : 53] It begins all the way back with verse 21 of chapter 1, where we have Homo sapien in his natural fallen Adamic habitat. And Paul just goes on throughout this portion of Romans up to chapter 3 and verse 20, telling us how mean and nasty and how depraved and fallen we are.

And as you read it, I don't have any difficulty with the truthfulness of it. I have to read every verse and say, It's true, O Lord. It's true. It's true. I don't like it. It's true. But it just isn't very pleasant. And if this picture is so distressing and so displeasing to you and to me, we who are just fellow sinners, then how do you think the holy righteous God looks upon this description of human beings? And I'm very, very thankful, however, for this passage of Scripture, because nothing highlights the grace of God like the sin of man.

Until you and I understand the depths of despair in which we really find ourselves, we cannot appreciate the length to which the God of all grace went to rescue us and bring us to himself.

[6 : 08] It isn't as though, it isn't as though we were just lacking in a few areas. We had some noble character qualities and some ignoble character qualities, and God looked down upon us, and he liked some of the things he saw, but he didn't like some of the other things that he saw.

So he called us to himself and cleaned us up a little bit and made us more presentable. But if that's the picture you have, you've missed it all. It is that while we were yet sinners, enemies of God, depraved, rejecting God, turning against the light, wanting nothing to do with God and his truth, at enmity with God, Paul says, in a state of war against God, haters of God, while we were that, God reached down in the person of Christ and drew us to himself.

Now that gives a new meaning to the theme of the grace of God when you realize what God had to work with in the beginning. That highlights the grace of God. We must travel the desert in order to appreciate the oasis.

We've been traveling the desert. We must fill our nostrils with the stench of decay to appreciate the exhilarating perfume of new life.

We must taste of the putrid, foul waters from the stagnant pool of moral filth to appreciate the glistening, refreshing waters that God has to give.

[7 : 38] And we have been in this swamp now for some time. I should like to share with you something that Dr. Barnhouse had to say about this same passage of scripture, and I thought as I read it, oh my, oh my, those are my sentiments exactly.

Listen to this. About this same portion, only he started in Romans 1, where all of the sins and the catalog of vices of man are listed. Dr. Barnhouse was for many years the pastor of 10th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, and he had a national radio ministry.

I do not think, this is a Wiseman opinion, take it or leave it, but I do not think there has been so capable an expositor arrive on the scene in the 20th century English-speaking world that can compare with Donald Gray Barnhouse.

And I would not be alone in that estimation. He said, there are some sermons that a true minister of the gospel loves to preach. There are other sermons which it hurts to preach. I wish that I did not have to include this present chapter, but when one sets out to be an expositor of the word of God and takes every verse, every line, every phrase, and every word just as they come, there are moments when the terrible things of God arrive in the narrative, and they must be treated.

When one drives from New York into the country toward the west, there must be a momentary dive into the tunnel under the river, then a stench through the Jersey industrial area where the road runs near a factory with a horrible stench.

[9 : 08] No one lingers there unless there is a traffic jam. The thousands of cars that pass that way whirl on toward green country sustained by the thought of what lies beyond.

Unfortunately, our road takes us through such an area of spiritual stench, and it would not be worthwhile preaching if we did not know from the map that we are going to cross the great divide in the third chapter of the epistle and descend into the pleasant valley which stems from the cross of the Savior and that therein we shall dwell evermore.

And on and on he relates about that particular portion, and it is rather depressing. The theme of this epistle, as we have pointed out in the past, is the righteousness of God and the unrighteousness of men, all men.

We have considered chapter 1 rather extensively, and in that, beginning with verses 21 through 32, Paul has given us a detailed moral description of the heathen.

They are referred to as having been given over. God gave them over. God gave them over. God gave them over. It is mentioned three times, 24, 26, and 28 in this text.

[10:24] He realizes that he has two basic constituencies in the audience that are going to be recipients of this letter. There will be the Jews and there will be the Gentiles.

And Paul, in his first chapter here, very adequately expresses the way that Gentiles appear before God.

He has gone over all of the depraved things that can be said about them. He has emphasized and highlighted the things for which the heathen were most known among the world.

And they are things with which all the Jews would agree. Paul is confident that when he writes this spiritual expose of the heathen, that the Jews constitute an amen corner.

They're saying, you're right, Paul. Those heathen, those heathen Gentiles, they are every bit as corrupt and foul as you say they are. But Paul is not contented to treat the subject with dealing with only half of humanity.

[11:26] He then swings his big guns, as it were, right over to the Jew. And he says, now listen. You, in verse 1, When you come over to verse 17, it becomes quite apparent that he is talking about the Jewish element in his audience.

And in verse 1 of chapter 2, Paul is saying, You do not have any difficulty keeping condemnation upon the Gentile. But I want you to know, says Paul, that those of you who would amen what I say about the Gentile, and condemn them, and judge them for their actions and their behavior, I want you to realize that you are really in the same boat that they are in.

You are equally guilty. You are equally condemned. Now, if you have these two classes, Jew and Gentile, who else have you? That's all there are. There are no more.

When you put all Jews together, and all Gentiles together, you have one basic lump of clay called humanity. Everybody is incorporated in those two distinctions.

And this is the point that he is working toward. All the world becomes accountable and guilty under the righteous judgment and condemnation of God. You see, God did not take steps to redeem all of mankind until it was determined that all of mankind needed a Redeemer.

[12:58] All of mankind is guilty. All of mankind is lost. And the redemption is just as broad as is the human failure. Because they are, in point of fact, the same as the heathen, the judgment of God falls alike on them.

Now, we might ask the question, why would Paul anticipate the response and the question that he gets here in verse 3? Notice verse 2 first. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

Now, the Jew would say, no argument there. That's right. That's right, Paul. The judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. And the word judgment here does not mean so much the act of judging.

It means the result. It means the finality of judgment. It carries with it, this word in the original, carries with it the idea of having been judged and sentenced and found guilty and under condemnation.

That is all borne out in the word judgment. No dispute there. But then when he comes to verse 3, he says, And do you, suppose this, you Jews, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?

[14:24] Apparently some were thinking that way. Paul addresses himself to that issue, and we might well ask the question, why would Paul think that any of the Jews in his audience would come back with that kind of opposition or that kind of question?

And the answer is simple. Paul knew the Jewish mind. He was a Jew. He knew how the Jews thought. He knew the kind of arguments that he would present prior to his encounter with Christ. He knew exactly what the Jewish mindset was and how they were thinking. And you and I must understand something about this in order to appreciate what Paul is saying here and what he is not setting up straw men and then knocking them down.

These are very viable opposition, points of opposition that he knows they are going to raise. And I think one of the first things you need to know is how the Jews regarded other non-Jews, that is, Gentiles, and then you will be able to understand why Paul has said what he has.

First of all, we have defined Jews as direct descendants of Abraham as opposed to all of the other members of the human race. If you are a Jew, you are a direct descendant of Abraham.

[15 : 38] If you are not a direct descendant of Abraham, you are not a Jew, at least not in the genealogical sense. You can become converted to Judaism or so on, but that's not what Paul has in mind here.

The Jewish mentality that existed during the time of Jesus and Paul is something that is abundantly clear throughout the Bible.

It begins in the Old Testament. It is even more pronounced in the New. And they would reason something like this. We Jews may be equally guilty even as the Gentiles, but God has made special provision for the Jews.

We are God's chosen people. And even if we are guilty as the Gentiles, God has made a way of escape for us because we are his chosen people.

We are Jews. We be Abraham's seed. Therefore, by virtue of the fact that we can trace our genealogy back to Abraham, this means for sure that God has provided us with a divine inoculation or immunization against the disease known as the wrath of God.

[16 : 57] The Jews, they regarded themselves as the covenant people of God and a cut above the Gentiles. Do you know what this is? This is racial superiority we are talking about.

And no one believed it more strongly than they. You know, isn't it almost uncanny that one of the paramount beliefs and doctrines of Hitler in World War II was the supremacy of the Nordic race, the supremacy of the Aryan people.

And who was it that did not fit that mold or even come close? The Jew and the blacks.

It almost seems as though centuries later the tables are kind of turned because the Jewish mentality for hundreds of years has been the Jew is superior.

There is something about a Jew that makes him a cut above all other men. And some of them actually had the audacity, the racial pride to believe that God chose them as his chosen people because they were Jews.

[18 : 22] Because they were the seed of Abraham. It is as though God looked down on all of humanity and said, who is the best group of people that I can get to represent me and to do what I want them to do?

Who are those that are most reliable, most trustworthy, most lovable, most dependable? Well, ah, there is the seed of Abraham. I couldn't find anyone to do a better job than the offspring of Abraham.

So, God chose them. You know, the scriptures do not indicate any kind of thought like that on the part of God. All we know is that God loved them because he loved them and he chose them because he chose them and we are not given more information beyond that.

But I want to tell you one thing. If history has borne out anything, it has borne out the fact that the Jew has not lived up to that high estimation that he had of himself.

He is not the most dependable, the most trustworthy, the most reliable, the most likely to succeed and get the job done. Neither is the Jew nor anyone else because we are all cut from the same bolt of cloth.

[19 : 26] The Jew isn't superior. The Jew isn't inferior. The Jew is just a human being who falls miserably short of the standards and righteousness of God as we all do.

But it is somewhat uncanny to me to think that centuries later someone came on the scene who proposed just the opposite theory and because of that the Jew had to go. They thought there were special privileges and advantages that exempted the Jew from the wrath of God.

The selection of Israel means the rejection of Gentiles. The Jews looked upon the Gentiles as fodder for the fires of hell. That's it.

Fuel fodder for the fires of hell. That's how they regarded the Gentiles. The uncircumcised dogs they referred to them. There is a little prayer that a Jew said every morning upon arising and every night before he went to bed.

Oh God I thank Thee that I was not born a Gentile nor a slave nor a woman. Now you talk about male chauvinism. I don't know if they still recite that prayer or not but this was known as a standard

prayer for all Jewish men for thousands of years.

[20 : 36] I thank Thee that I was not born a Gentile nor a slave nor a woman. I've heard it this way. I thank Thee that I was not born a woman a slave nor a Gentile. I don't know which it was they detested to most ladies but this was well before the liberation movement.

There was also a tradition that stated that Abram was situated at the gates of paradise and Hades depending on which rabbi you read after I don't know how he got to both places but Abraham was situated at the gates of paradise and every Jew who came there was automatically granted entrance just because he was a son of Abraham and that when Abraham situated himself at the gate of Hades every Jew who presented himself there no matter how worthy or deserving of going into Hades if he was the seed of Abraham Abraham prevented him and would not allow him to enter.

That's the way they looked at their own race in contrast to how they looked at the Gentiles and Paul says that isn't true there is no basis in fact for that at all because as the conclusion is going to read in verse 11 there is no partiality with God and that means God puts the Jew and the Gentile on the same footing.

It does not mean that the Jew doesn't have some special privileges and special advantages he does but in so far as judgment is concerned God is going to go no more lightly on the Jew than he will on the Gentile.

This whole theme of judgment is one that permeates this passage of Romans 2 here and there are various ways in which modern men handle the theme of judgment and as I looked at this and thought about it and worked this out I have come to the conclusion that I ought not to label this the manner in which modern man looks at judgment because man has always looked at judgment this way whether modern man or ancient man the first thing he does with the idea of divine judgment or pay day someday or a final reckoning the first thing he does is he may reject it he just says there is no such thing I don't buy that I don't believe it I will not accept it I just put it out of my mind and make as though it isn't true because it isn't true never will be there is no judgment and he rejects it the second thing that he may do is exemption that's what some of the Jews did that's true there is going to be a divine judgment but I am exempt I am not going to come under that judgment because of who I am

[23 : 16] I have been delivered from that and they are therefore exempted I'm different and then thirdly a man may engage in negotiation he's going to strike a deal with God he's going to bargain with God if you will not judge me or call me into judgment or condemnation then I'll do this for you I'll give money to the church I'll be religious I'll say prayers on Sunday I'll do this I'll do that that's a kind of negotiation or he may engage in procrastination I do believe there is a judgment of God men ought to prepare themselves against it and I intend to later some other time I'll put it off I've got plenty of time I'm a young man yet and there's no reason for me to be concerned about the judgment of God or the last thing that a man usually comes to is confrontation and this is the only honest way to handle judgment there is going to be a judgment I am a likely candidate for that judgment I am going to confront the issue of judgment and see what steps can be taken to avoid it and when he does that he comes to some other conclusions it results in substitution wherein he sees

Christ as dying in his place as his sacrifice and then reconciliation when he receives that savior who bore his sin in his own body on the tree then God reconciles that sinner and the savior together so that as a result there is a resolution and there is therefore now no judgment no condemnation to those that are in Christ in verse 5 Paul talks about the stubbornness of the Jew and we saw this word in the original is the word from which we get the word sclerotic or sclerosis you have all heard of hardening of the arteries that's exactly what this is only it is the hardening of the heart it is the heart becoming impenetrable it is a hardness of soul a hardness of mind that which will not give in and will not yield call it if you will a spiritual hardening of the arteries it is hanging on to a lie or an indefensible position because you do not like the obvious alternative that is the stubbornness of the human heart and do not confuse stubbornness with steadfastness stubbornness means when you hang on to something that you know isn't true but you like what the alternative is even less so you insist on hanging on to this and this is what

I believe and don't confuse me with facts my mind is made up I don't care what the evidence says I don't care what the Bible says I don't care what God says this is what I want to do this is what I want to believe that's stubbornness steadfastness is a contention for the truth and an unwillingness to

surrender it no matter what the opposition one is true and one is not stubbornness produces an unrepentant heart with the result that in verse 5 wrath is stored up it is the storing up of wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God the King James translates this treasures treasures up wrath can you imagine now in this day and age with the economy as haywire as it is people are much more conscious about storing up things depositing things and money and accounts and all the rest of that more so than probably we have ever been but can you imagine anybody storing up wrath treasuring wrath banking the wrath of God that's what a man does by his stubbornness of heart that leads to a refusal to repent to change his mind even when the evidence is overwhelming that he ought to change his mind he's not going to change his mind by refusing to do that

Paul says he is placing the wrath of God in the bank in an account under his name and the day is going to come when the account is closed and he is forced to draw out everything on deposit and that is the wrath of God in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God remember Dr. Barnhouse saying that someone had spoken on this subject somewhere and someone asked him after the service if that wasn't a rather medieval doctrine very ancient doctrine you know this thing of the righteous judgment of God and he said well it all depends I suppose on what you mean how far you go back with the middle ages and they said well you know back to maybe eight or nine hundred or a thousand a.D.

[28 : 16] didn't this doctrine develop out of that kind of thinking and he said well really if you go back a thousand years further you'll be closer to the truth because it is a first century doctrine it is one that was taught by our Lord Jesus Christ himself many people are not aware of the fact that every time Jesus Christ spoke about heaven he spoke about hell five times this is the meek and mild low and gentle Jesus the wrath of God is being accumulated against the day of wrath and righteous judgment in verse six we have a passage here that presents a theoretical position of man and God and his law and let's read it talks about rendering to every man according to his deeds to those who by perseverance and doing good seek for immortality eternal life seek for glory and honor and immortality eternal life but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness wrath and indignation there will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil of the

Jew first and also of the Greek but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good to the Jew first and also to the Greek for there is no partiality with God now as we read verse 10 here how can we possibly say that this is what will befall every man who does good then you come over to chapter three and read where Paul says there is none who do good no not one in chapter three and verse twelve and the answer is a possibility of two different things I really do not know for sure which it is first of all a man does have the potential for doing good once he is in Christ he does not have the capacity for doing good that God will accept apart from Christ men can do a lot of good things for each other and men accept it as good but God doesn't because it is only the work of the flesh the work of the flesh may appear good to man but it is a stench in the nostrils of God so it may mean that on the plus side of the cross on the plus side of Christ man can do good to his fellow man because he is energized by the

Holy Spirit who is operating in him and through him to do that good or it may simply mean that theoretically speaking if a man does good this will be his reward and I think that well may be on target too because the theory of judgment is presented here and what Paul is saying is this look every man who keeps the law of God perfectly is going to be saved because if he keeps the law of God perfectly he is totally absent of sin and if he is totally absent of sin then God has no basis for judgment the man stands acquitted not condemned the only problem is we've never been able to find a man like that there was a God man like that once and we resented his humanity and the sinlessness of it and his performance so much that we put him on a cross but he's the only one who ever lived who measured up to these standards I think it is similar to what Jesus taught in the gospels like what he taught the rich young ruler look all you have to do to inherit eternal life is be perfect theoretically that's true and if someone is then eternal life is what they inherit but Paul is saying that is true only in theory but because all have fallen short all have broken God's standards and because all have all are condemned so the theory is set forth and it's a valid theory eternal life will be given to every man who is righteous but there is none righteous no not one that's the conclusion that he makes in verses 14 through 16 he skips quickly back to the

Gentiles who do not have the law he says the Gentiles who do not have the law that is the law of Moses do instinctively the things of the law how do they do that why do they do if they don't have the law of Moses how is it that they do instinctively the things of the law he goes on to say these not having the law are a law to themselves in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them on the day when according to my gospel God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus and all he means to say here is that listen even though a Gentile who does not have a formal declaration of the Mosaic law he has the works of the law written on his heart because God built it in to every member of the human race God has built within the human psyche the basic knowledge of right and wrong good and evil and man who does not have the law of Moses still has a law no man is without law you can go in and men have to aboriginal tribes where no kind of civilization has ever penetrated people are not reading writing or anything and they have without fail in that primitive society they have drawn up for themselves a code of conduct a standard laws rules regulations that apply to people in that community where do they get such a concept it is within them and what Paul is saying here is that whether man has the formal declaration of the law of God or whether he simply has the law written in the basic in the psyche of the human being it makes no difference because all men have violated whatever law they have whether natural or supernatural no man has measured up to the law of God and I'll tell you something else and Paul intimates this not only does man not measure up to God's standards man doesn't even measure up to his own standards someone says well I believe all you really have to do is the best you can whoever did that whoever does the best they can at anything they do there have been a couple of times when I've expended myself on a certain project that I thought I did really the best I could and looking back on some reflection later I saw a couple of things that I could have done that I didn't a couple of bases that [34 : 58] I didn't cover nobody has ever measured up to their own standards much less to God's and because we do not we stand justly guilty justly condemned and when Paul devotes the remaining of this portion remainder of this portion to the Jew he begins with verse 17 and it is since not if but since you bear the name Jew you rely upon God you boast in God you rely upon the law you know his will you approve the things that are essential being instructed out of the law you who are Jews you are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind a light to those who are in darkness a corrector of the foolish a teacher of the immature you've got all these things going for you let me ask you something Paul says you therefore who teach another do you not teach yourself you who preach that one should not steal do you steal yes we teach others that they ought not to steal but we steal too everybody steals people people may say something that isn't true about someone else you know what they've done they've stolen from their reputation and their character they've robbed another person of a good name there are those who wouldn't think of going into a store downtown shoplifting something you know oh heavens that's a common criminal shoplifting oh I wouldn't do that good grief no I certainly wouldn't do that but my employer has kept me in personal office supplies for the last 20 years what's that that's thievery that's thievery oh I wouldn't

I wouldn't think of stealing anything a hotel ashtrays and towels oh well they expect you to take those you take those as souvenirs everybody knows that you're going to steal those anyway you know besides you can use them at home and not only that but did you see the price of that hotel bill man I paid for this thing three or four times that's called rationalization I'm going to take it they charge too much anyway I'll just even the bill a little bit I'll steal these towels and I'll steal and that's a nice lamp too that'd look nice people you'd be surprised how people rationalize it they don't consider that stealing that's not stealing that's evening the score that's all that's doing that's stealing income tax well that's another old ballgame I don't want to get in that we'll have you all up front here on your knees you who say that one should not commit adultery do you commit adultery depends on your definition Jesus gave a pretty precise definition of it didn't he you who abhor idols do you rob temples you who boast in the law through your breaking the law do you dishonor God listen says

Paul the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you what is he saying there he's saying look it is common knowledge all over the world that we who are Jews have a certain code a certain standard of ethics and righteousness and right and wrong and yet we fracture that code and we violate those laws and we do so so often and so consistent after making such a big to do about them that the Gentiles look at us and look at our code and look at our inconsistency and our hypocrisy and they blaspheme God because of our miserable performance in living up to what

we say we believe and the Jews say that God the Jews worship they insist on worshipping just one you know Jehovah just one that's all they worship

I don't know if that God is stupid or what but his own people sure don't live up to what they say he wants them to do and they blaspheme the name of God because of the inconsistent conduct of the Jews just as it is written for indeed now here Paul attacks the very last thing that the Jews have to cling to their precious circumcision for indeed circumcision is a value and if you were a Jew a male Jew you were circumcised if you practiced the law but if you are a transgressor of the law your circumcision has become uncircumcision now what this means is that if your circumcision is nothing more than a ritual cutting of the flesh it isn't worth anything and yet to many of these Jews this is all that had become it was just a religious ritual and Paul says you place so much emphasis and so much pride in the fact that you have your children circumcised on the eighth day the seed of Abraham and all the rest of it listen if your circumcision which outwardly indicates your covenant relationship and your obedience to God it is an outward indication of that but if you do not have the reality of it on the inside then the circumcision on the outside is worthless doesn't count for anything it's just playing games that's all just religiosity this is why the Old Testament prophets talked about the people circumcising their heart now of course that's a metaphor he isn't talking about any kind of literal circumcision but he's saying you need to be obedient inwardly like the outward manifestation says you are obedient and circumcised lips are another thing you need to speak the truth and this of course they were not doing he says if you practice the law but you are a transgressor of the law your circumcision has become uncircumcision all he's saying is look circumcision won't save you circumcision won't cut it no pun intended but it won't

[41 : 02] Paul says that's not going to make the difference if therefore the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the law that is the gentile will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision sure because what does God read God reads the heart God reads the inner motivation God reads where the person really is not the outward appearance as we saw in Samuel God does not look upon the outward appearance men are impressed by the outward appearance not only by other men but of women but God reads the heart this is why true beauty in womanhood is the inner meekness and quietness of spirit that is in the heart as opposed to externals will not he who is physically uncircumcised if he keeps the law will he not judge you who though having the letter of the law and circumcision are a transgressor of the law for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly true Judaism does not simply consist of a cutting of the flesh neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh but he is a Jew who is one inwardly and circumcision is that which is of the heart by the spirit not by the letter and his praise is not from men but from God now Paul knows having leveled all of this content here that the Jews are going to have a number of objections that they're planning to come back with because he knows what they're going to be he completely disarms his audience by posing those objections by posing the arguments that he knows they will answer with and then going on to answer them the objections are in chapter 3 verses 1 3 5 7 and 9 the answers are in 2 4 6 8 and 9 what advantage then has the Jew or what is the benefit of circumcision Paul said that's new he knew that's what some of them are going to say well Paul if what you say is true then what's the big deal about being a Jew anyway what makes a difference whether you're a Jew or not

Paul knew that was the argument they would come back with and he says well great in every respect there is tremendous advantage and benefit in connection with being a Jew first of all that they were entrusted with the oracles of God it was to the Jew that the word of God came and then he knows their next argument is going to be alright so the Jew has the oracles of God so not all Jews have been obedient to what God has said in his word does that mean then that if the Jew is not obedient that God's just going to cancel it all out and forget all about it God's not going to do that is he Paul comes back and says may it never be or meganoito in the Greek if some did not believe their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God will it Paul says may it never be rather let God be found true though every man be found a liar that's pretty strong and it doesn't mean necessarily that when all the evidence is in God will be true and man will be a liar although it does mean that it does involve that but what it means more pointedly and directly is this is that God is true and every man is a liar just like that that thou mightest be justified in thy words and mightest prevail when thou art judged this is a quote taken from the Old Testament taken from one of David's Psalms and then the other argument that is presented and it gets very very ridiculous if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness

of God what shall we say the God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous is he Paul said I am speaking in human terms I am speaking from the attitude and standpoint of the man on the street Paul said this is the kind of stupid reasoning that a man would come up with and the opposition point is this well look if our unrighteousness is the thing is the raw material that God uses to demonstrate his righteousness then how can God judge me for that because after all it is my contribution it is my contribution of sin to this cause that makes God look so good how is he then going to find fault with me

Paul said in verse 6 meganoito may it never be if you follow that kind of reasoning how will God judge the world if you want to say that it is the sin of man that makes God look so good and therefore God shouldn't hold that against us you follow that kind of reasoning and God has no basis for judging the world but the world is going to be judged for if through my lie the truth of God abounded to his glory why am I also still being judged as a sinner and why not say as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say let us do evil that good may come their condemnation is just Paul says that argument isn't even worthy of an answer their condemnation is just this is exactly what Paul was accused of on more occasions than one he says that where sin abounds grace does much more abound because the more sinful man is the more grace God employs to overcome that sin and the principle is this the more sin there is the more grace there is to counteract it so if we want to get more grace how do we get it more sin so let us sin that grace may abound

[46 : 39] Paul says it's absolutely unbelievable that anybody could present something like that it is never right to do wrong in order to do right the end does not justify the means it's not going to be too long we're going to be discussing a budget for the upcoming year here at grace and we'll be talking about money for different projects and money for missions and what not do you know something we're rather limited in what we take in here in our Sunday offerings if everybody would go out now I know not all of you would be successful because it comes right down to it there is not a pro in this area in our whole midst but some of you are pretty shrewd and you might be able to pull it off if we would all go out and rob a bank now if you figure just make this a family project not individual let's take 125 families here and grace out of 125 families I think probably a third or fourth of us could get away with it then you bring the money that you get put it in the offering box out there we'll use that for missions wouldn't that be great is there anything wrong with the end no but what about the means well we're using it for a good project

I mean can you think of a worthier cause than reaching missions I can just see it now well yes your honor we did rob those banks but really we wanted to send this money out to the missionaries can you imagine the tongue lashing that a secular judge who would have no appreciation for spiritual things would lay on you for something like that and he wouldn't have to use the Bible at all it's preposterous that's what Paul was charged with let's do evil that good may come and the more evil you do the more good that will come and then he says here I'm speaking in human terms he says this is the kind of harebrained thinking that only a man could present this is what he's saying well then in verse 9 what is our conclusion to all of this are we in the final analysis Paul says are we Jews really any better than they the Gentiles no not really he has shot down the argument of Jewish superiority of racial superiority of which he is a member of that Jewish race he has demolished the argument and he has says not at all for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks or Gentiles are all under sin in the final analysis that's the verdict then he goes on to list the 14 count indictment that goes from verse 10 down through verse 18 and it is a kind of compilation of all that has been said by way of conclusion from all of these previous verses here is the correct divine estimation of mankind now as you read these verses 10 through 18 these verses do not represent what man thinks about man they represent what God thinks about man this is one of the evidences to me for the divine inspiration of the scriptures someone has said that the Bible is a book that man would not write if he could and could not write if he would the Bible is a book that is painfully honest it does not color the facts of history it does not color the facts of human sin and failure it just records the truth and lets it all fall where it may do you think that David the psalmist would have written the things that he wrote about himself so uncomplimentary just from a purely human viewpoint I think not David wrote about the truthful sordidness of the whole affair in which he had engaged and he spelled it all out and then he repented of it the Bible as someone has said really tells it like it is I remember having heard an account of Sir Oliver Cromwell of England was looked upon as the great British hero of his day some of you historical buffs

remember Oliver Cromwell and the roundheads and what they did for Great Britain and someone had been commissioned to paint his portrait and he sat for it for several hours and this great artist finally finished the portrait and invited

Sir Cromwell over to look at it and he took one look at it and said that isn't me his advisors came in and looked at it and everyone was just a little bit embarrassed because the artist out of what he thought was kindness or artistic liberty call it what you will had taken the liberty to engage in a little cosmetic improvement in the oil painting and he left off of the painting the unsightly warts that covered the face and nose of Cromwell he intended it as a compliment but it wasn't a truthful representation Cromwell took one look at it and said do it over and this time paint me warts and all that's the way the bible describes man warts and all it's not the way man describes man in verse 19 the conclusion we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law that every mouth

[53 : 13] Jew and Gentile may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God although they are not in their mind and they do not wish to be they will be because by works of law no flesh no living human being will be justified in God's sight for through the law comes the knowledge of sin and that's the key there you see in his sight in his sight Paul has alluded to that earlier in chapter 2 as well makes a tremendous distinction between in God's sight and in man's sight by the works of the law lots of men are justified before other men there are a lot of good men we all know them but God says there is none good no not one all of the things that are true here in this catalog of iniquity is man without Christ or man with Christ but operating out of his old nature all of these things are part and parcel of the human race now he brings us up to this glorious portion starting here in verse 21 as the old colored preacher says brethren all that what has gone before talks about the mess we is in and that which comes after talks about what God has done about it and that's the part

I'm looking forward to starting next time questions or comments I'm almost out of breath don't remember racing through a passage like that for a long time anybody all right let's stand shall we because love and they were with every